have mooted idea of having a Rapid Deployment Force to protect Indian interests;

(b) whether concept framed by Integrated Defence Staff comprising all three services, stresses on quick movement of troops, light and heavy weapons and logistical support to an area of operation;

(c) whether all chiefs of services have examined this proposal and finally taken its decision; and

(d) if so, what are the details of scheme prepared and by when it is likely to be started?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) Keeping in view the increased strategic importance of seas surrounding India, an idea was mooted by the Indian Navy some time ago, to set up a force comprising troops of all the three services, which can be deployed quickly to an area of operation. The concept is in a nascent stage and the proposal has not taken concrete shape so far.

Pension to widows of freedom fighters

*316. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that many widows of freedom fighters in the country are not getting pension;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the number of proposals received from Punjab Government for giving pension to the widows of freedom fighters; and

(d) the number of proposals cleared so far and number of widows are getting freedom pension in Punjab presently?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MANIKRAO GAVIT): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Cases for transfer of dependent family pension to widows do not come to Government of India. The procedure for transfer of family pension in the name of eligible dependents (widow/widower, unmarried and

unemployed daughters, mother and father) of deceased freedom fighters pensioners has been decentralized with effect from 1.5.1992. The Pension Disbursing Authorities (Public Sector Bank Branches and Government Treasuries) have been authorized to transfer dependent family pension to the eligible dependents at their level.

(d) No statistics relating to the number of widows who are getting pension are maintained.

Separatist forces in Manipur

†*317. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that separatist forces are creating obstructions in the functioning of local administration in Manipur;

(b) if so, details thereof;

(c) the strategy prepared by Government to tackle separatist forces in the State and the main features thereof; and

(d) whether Government are preparing any comprehensive plan for early solution of this burning issue by including various ethnic groups and political leaders of Manipur; if so, complete details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI REGUPATHY): (a) and (b) A number of militant outfits are operating in Manipur. Their activities, inter alia, include extortion, forcefully obtaining contract works in the name of their front organisations, resorting to frequent *'Bandhs'* and 'General Strikes' causing strain on the law and order machinery and hampering economic growth.

(c) and (d) The strategy adopted by Government to deal with militant outfits in Manipur, *inter alia*, includes enhanced deployment of Army and Central Police Forces, coordinated action by the security forces for counter insurgency operations, modernization/upgradation of the State Police Forces, reimbursement of security related expenditure to the State Government and declaration of militant organizations as 'unlawful associations'. A Unified Headquarters has also been set up in the State

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.